

Testimony for the Committee on Energy and Technology

In Support of H.B. No. 7156 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY DERIVED FROM OFFSHORE WIND

and In Support of S.B. No. 875 AN ACT EXPANDING CONNECTICUT'S OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY PORTFOLIO

February 25, 2019

Dear Co-Chairs Needleman and Arconti, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. No. 7156, An Act Concerning the Procurement Of Energy Derived From Offshore Wind and S.B. No. 875 An Act Expanding Connecticut's Offshore Wind Energy Portfolio.

We are extremely concerned about the growing impacts of climate change and the need to eliminate fossil fuel GHG emissions. We would like to see very strong steps and

- I support the Committee's call for up to 2000 MW of offshore wind, but the bill should be amended to make that a mandate requiring DEEP to procure 2000 MW by 2030. MA and NY have solid commitments like that, and if we don't send a strong message to the industry that Connecticut wants to be a regional hub for offshore wind staging and supply chain activities then those jobs will go elsewhere.
- I support both bills' labor provisions that will ensure the jobs created by these investments are high-quality jobs with health and safety protections.
- I am concerned that neither bill incorporates any environmental protections. At a minimum, the legislation should require the DEEP Commissioner to consider whether submitted proposals "contain explicit descriptions of the best management practices to be employed, as informed by the latest science at the time of a proposal, to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to wildlife, natural resources, ecosystems, and traditional or existing water dependent uses."

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on these bills.

Chris Schweitzer
361 Elm Street
New Haven, CT 06511

Reasons for Emergency Action on Climate Change.

1. We have already created dangerous amounts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which have permanently damaged critical ecosystems and shifted Earth climate systems into uncharted territory. These systems are very complex and it's extremely hard to know how one change might cascade into other systems.

2. The present level of warming is already doing significant damage to marginalized communities around the world who are not responsible for creating climate change. They are seeing increasing heat waves, extreme weather events, and droughts causing displacement, infectious disease, hunger, and death.

3. Even at present GHG levels, the warming of the planet will continue for centuries and continue to melt ice sheets and glaciers and raise sea level. The last time the Earth had GHG levels this high, sea level was 20 feet higher, a huge threat to coastal communities.
4. Each year of adding more GHG emissions to the atmosphere creates higher risk of setting off natural feedback loops that will accelerate GHG emissions (Ex: global warming sparks more droughts and forest fires, fires produce more CO₂, which then creates even more global warming).
5. Waiting to invest in climate solutions is creating more damage and more costs through extreme weather events, changes in ecosystems, and creating long term challenges that will be very expensive to remedy. Given that all human development (agriculture, city location, infrastructure, economies, etc) is designed in response to the previous climate system it makes sense to keep the climate as stable as possible.
6. Ocean acidification, which is a result of CO₂ being absorbed into oceans, has made the oceans 30% more acidic which is negatively impacting shellfish reproduction, accelerating the collapse of coral reefs, and threatening other key species.
7. The longer we wait to shift off fossil fuels the heavier cost future generations will have to pay for our failures.
8. New weather records are regularly being set across the country including, 50 inches of rain in Houston, extensive drought in California, Hurricane Maria's destruction of Puerto Rico, etc. Globally we have seen the strongest typhoon ever with 200 mph winds and heat in India so high the government told people not to go out 10am to 4pm.
9. Climate change is accelerating species extinction with the present rate on extinction 1000 to 10000 times the normal rate (Center for Biological Diversity).
10. Climate change is increasingly damaging our economy by disrupting supply chains, interrupting work, destroying essential infrastructure, causing displacement of workers, costing huge sums for response and defense of communities, and risks causing financial crisis related to the carbon bubble.